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FROM FRANCE.

Holy Week, and How It is Observed by the Parisians.

The Effect of the Lenten Season on the Gay French People.

The Strike at the Anzin Coal Mines.

A Week of Crime in the French Capital.

Other Points and Paragraphs.

[Special Correspondence.]

PARIS, April 9th, 1884.

Holy Week, despite the proverbial indifference of Parisians, is sensibly marked by sobriety and meditation. There is a break felt to be on the movements of ordinary life; the most cynical cannot divest himself of the feeling, that there is a special hallowing in the times. At every turn he is reminded of this; ladies are invisible, save at the churches; men drift into the seclusion of home; the theatres are closed from Thursday; profane are suspended by sacred concerts; the churches are in mourning; in their atmospheres there is sorrow tempered with hope. To deviate from the tacit sobriety which reigns, would not be considered respectable, and politeness but too often sways, where religion fails to impose.

If the number of church-goers be taken as a proof of piety, Paris may well claim to rank among the most religious of capitals. From daylight till noon on Palm Sunday, the churches represented a continuous stream, not of visitors or curious, but of worshippers, who, while delighted with the music of the *miserere*, did not forget the words of the psalmist. And the best of all tests of the times of refreshing, the central aisles were occupied by men. At Notre Dame Cathedral, the services were peculiarly solemn, gorgeous and impressive. The choral accompaniments were perfect, and the instrumental parts were executed by distinguished artists, only too happy to place their talent to glorify Him who bestowed it. The cardinal archbishop after blessing the palm, made a processional tour of the building, and on arriving at the grand entrance door, knocked three times when it was thrown open, and the procession, waiving its way to the high altar, the pealing anthem swelling the note of praise.

Box generally does duty for palm. In Paris, it is the Riviera supplies chiefly the latter, but Italy buys the wicker crop in advance. M. Garnier, the architect of the new opera, derives a respectable revenue from his palm groves. The display of box was very general, and its sale was brisk outside the churches; few women but receive a branch, and having had it blessed, suspend it at the head of their bed or hang it over the mantel piece of their boudoir. Not only were the ears of hus and dray horses decorated with sprigs of box, but many persons wore it in their hats. Was it a protest against a materialist, for the religionists are carrying war into their camp? The cemeteries were visited by crowds. How just that paying a tribute to the dead at this period, you feel relatively more depressed than at the formal fete des morts of November? Perhaps we are sad, that those whom we only can rejoice, are absent to share the joy of opening buds and flowers, and the singing of the birds that seem here to throw plaintive thrill into their warblings. In the south of France the ancient custom still exists, to place a copy of the New Testament in a chair on Palm Sunday and so carry it round the aisles; in order to typify the triumph of Jesus Christ, by the book which he inspired.

During Holy Week soirees, dinner parties, etc., are tabooed. It is an epoch of mourning for ladies; in the fashionable world each day has its special toilette, commencing with rather bright colors, and deepening into the most sombre shades. Tuesday is generally devoted to visiting the convent or school where you have been educated, and to receive good counsel from the superioress or the directress; Thursday is partially employed at the florists, to order bouquets, to be delivered to the vicars of the churches, to decorate the imitation sepulchre and side chapels. It is the last wall of elegant piety, a souvenir of Madeleine anointing the feet of Jesus. Good Friday is wholly taken up in pilgrimages, in abstinence, and visiting the poor. A few hours break was formally allowed to do Long Champs, when that open air redoubt for the fashions existed. But Long Champs was the end of the promenade to a noted convent, so piety and worldliness happened to go hand-in-hand. Easter Saturday is accepted as the dawn of every day life; joy commences to replace sorrow, and gaiety to succeed austerity.

Good Friday is a most superstitious day in France. At the seaports, no crew would sail on that day, the tars generally devote it to scourging the effigy of Judas Escariot, winding up by burning it in a tar barrel. Thus despite all progress, superstitious beliefs are not extinct. There is in the depths of the human heart a singular taste for all that is mysterious, inexplicable want to tremble before the unknown, and which resists the light of reason and good sense. It has been ever thus from the origin of humanity. The Greeks and Romans,

despite their culture and robustness, had their fatal days, and marked, in the calendar, when business was to be suspended.

Cynical though they be, Parisians yield to the influence. It is a notorious fact, that the receipts of the Omnibus company are 25 per cent. less on Fridays, than on any other day of the week; and if Friday happen to be also the 13th of a month, the receipts fall to 50 per cent. It is not only because Jesus was crucified on a Friday, but that at the last supper, there were thirteen at table. You would not find a lady in France to give a dinner to thirteen guests. It is an unlucky number. During the old monarchy in France, it was on Good Friday that the chancellor sealed all letters for the remission of penalties. From Good Friday till Easter Sunday, no church bells ring; the bells are said to have gone to Rome.

Paris returns eighty members to the municipal council, or four for each ward; the new bill as voted by the Chamber, and thrown out by the Senate, and re-voted by the deputies, henceforth divides the city into four electoral districts, to return about the same number of councilors, but *pro rata* to the population, and by *Scrutin de Liste*. If the system will swamp the monarchical minority, it will exclude the annexed, but professed communists from being returned. It is the forecast of the plan of balloting for deputies and senators, and which caused the downfall of Gambetta, because precociously proposed.

The strike at the Anzin coal and iron mines augments in violence; the Anarchists kept "blowing the coils," the fighting the military is left to the women and children—the old revolutionary tactics, as French soldiers would never fire on either.

M. Magis, who leads the chauvinist section of the Suez shareholders, declares his party far from decreasing, has augmented; he is confident of securing the rejection of the compromise with the English shippers, and thus maintain the canal French, and have a political grip at some time on Egypt, as the route to the future empire, doubtless, of French China. Toss with France on the eastern, and Russia on the western flank, British India will find itself between the anvil and the hammer. Only the latter exist nearer home, for both powers.

M. Hughes Kraft may reasonably count upon his statue, as the lever for erecting such a still life. He has unconsciously solved one of the thorns in the flesh of every resident here, save Victor Hugo, whose pet cabman is a fellow poet. M. Kraft has resided for some time in Yokohama. Between that city and its suburbs, there is a class of "runners," who instead of cabs, have a hand cart arrangement, by which they trundle fares, at the rate of five miles an hour, or double the velocity of a Paris cab, when drawn even by a Gladiateur. The trundlers can do their thirty-six miles a day, in sunshine or shade without fatigue; they live on a bowl of rice and a few mouthfuls of cold tea is their sole pick-me-up; they are as merry as crickets, are as polite as courtiers, crack jokes with their fares, and never demand a *pour boire*; that would be a great insult as a tip to an American waiter. It is proposed to try the experiment at Paris—as a last chance; if so, it is to be hoped the distinguished foreigners will not fail to bring their double swords, as the out-kirts of the city are dangerous even for policemen.

When Japanese ladies and gentlemen meet in the streets, they salute it seems several times, by doubling themselves in two, and passing their hands from their head to their knees; whistling their compliments and forcing a smile. They could not beat the French or the Italians at the grinning business. Meals are served by women waiters, who bring each dish on a separate little table, kneeling all the while. For one-franc and a-half, the traveller can have a supper, a bed, the first plunge into a bath that would recall the sufferings of St. John in his cauldron at Patmos, wax lights and a breakfast. The religion of the country is Buddhism, but as liberty of conscience exists, every inhabitant appears to be a sect in himself, and selects his own savior, hero, or divinity. Catholics and Protestants have alike failed in their missions.

Paris has had a very fair week of crime; one case, where a wife shoots her husband, and perhaps by the law of sympathies, a husband massacres his once Juliet. A money lender had just time to ring and inform his clerk that he had taken poison, when he fell down and expired. The parents of an infant aged two years, left their apartment for a short time; on returning, everything had been knocked about, but nothing stolen, and the child was found lying at the bottom of a washing tub of water, drowned. Two women quarreled over a common lover—a reprobate doctor; one waylaid the rival and threw vitriol in her face; the victim had been very beautiful; she is in hospital since five months, one eye burned to the socket, the other destroyed, and the face and shoulders, following the photos handed up to the jury, were as if they had been chopped by a butcher. The Grevin wax-work naturally is preparing to add this model of living, quivering, raw flesh, to its chamber of horrors. Madame Tussaud cannot come up to that exhibit.

Lunatics and measles are on the increase; since 1885, the former, according to Dr. Lunier, have augmented by 22 per cent. Of the total of non compos mentis, 67 per cent. are idiots. The latter following the doctor, are the consequence of mothers living in unhealthy homes,

as when residing in a pure region, their offspring are ever healthy. The epidemic of measles exhibits this peculiarity; it is most virulent in the most healthy quarters of the city. The weekly births continue to represent about the same number of males, 656, as females, 653; of the total births, 23 per cent. are illegitimate. The marriages are generally about one-fourth of the total births.

M. Goudinet, the dramatist, is very humane; he merits to be entered on the poet's "list of friends," as he would not heedlessly tread on a worm. He received a present of a cageful of birds from a bright, sunny clime, and to impress his feathered friends with the illusion that there was no place like home, Goudinet illuminates the room at night where the cage hangs, with candles and lamps; the same for foggy days.

Between two gentlemen—"Who is that monumental woman on the sofa?" "That monument expiatoire, alas! Sir! is my mother-in-law."

Engaging a cook:—"Mistress: "And your testimonials?" "Better Madame still, there are the newspapers, where I have been four times acquitted for stealing."

She Must Have Lost It.

The other morning a sad looking citizen walked into the office of Wells & Fargo's Express and began solemnly going up in a package a battered looking silver dollar. Having accomplished this, he passed the enclosed over to the clerk and said:

"I found this dollar on Market street last night; I wish you'd address it to Adeline Patti New York."

"Think she lost it, eh?" "Think?" said the man in a surprised voice, "why, of course! So far as I can learn it's the only dollar left in San Francisco, and, of course, it must have been dropped by her. Send it along, please, and you'll have to collect the charges at the other end. I haven't got a cent."

And there wasn't a man in the house but was as dry as the citizen who walked off to keep an engagement with the Bankruptcy Commissioner.—[San Francisco Post.]

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